



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **State Health Department Offers Guidance To Help Care for Ill People at Home During the Upcoming Influenza Season**

BISMARCK, N.D. – Because many people who become ill with influenza will be cared for at home, the North Dakota Department of Health is providing guidance to people who will be caring for ill friends or family members.

For most people, the novel H1N1 influenza appears to cause illness that is about the same severity as seasonal influenza. This year, as during other influenza seasons, the vast majority of people who become ill with influenza will recover at home. However, people should use their experience with seasonal influenza to guide them as to when they should seek medical care.

The North Dakota Department of Health provides the following guidance for caring for ill people at home:

- Have the ill individual or individuals stay in a separate bedroom.
  - Keep the door closed.
  - Keep a window open if the weather outside is not too cold.
- Designate a single bathroom to be used only by ill individuals.
- Designate one person to care for the ill person.
  - The caretaker should be healthy and not pregnant.
- If the ill person will tolerate it, have him or her wear a surgical mask.
- Provide tissues for ill people.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces on a regular basis.
- Have the caregiver wear a mask if he or she is helping with breathing treatments.
- Make sure the whole household engages in frequent hand washing and good respiratory etiquette.

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*Visit the health department home page at [www.ndhealth.gov](http://www.ndhealth.gov).*

- Do not allow visitors into the home.
- Keep the ill person at home until 24 hours after the fever has subsided without the use of fever-reducing medication.

Monitor the health of the ill person:

- Contact a medical provider as soon as symptoms develop if the ill person:
  - Is younger than 5.
  - Has underlying health conditions, such as:
    - Lung disease including asthma.
    - Heart disease.
    - Metabolic disease, including diabetes.
    - Neurological or muscular developmental problems.
  - Is pregnant.
- Monitor fever frequently every day.
- Monitor fluid intake; make sure ill individuals are drinking plenty of clear fluids.
- Treat symptoms with over-the-counter medications.
  - Do not use aspirin to treat symptoms in children younger than 18.
- Monitor for symptoms of illness in all members of the household.

Seek medical care immediately if you have concerns about the ill person or if you notice any of the following:

- Blue lips
- Bluish or gray skin
- Fast, difficult or painful breathing
- Chest pain
- Dehydration
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Irritability in a small child (so irritable the child does not want to be held)
- Difficulty being awakened or aroused; confusion
- Symptoms that improve but then return with a fever and a worse cough

More information about influenza, including a fact sheet about home care, is available at [www.ndflu.com](http://www.ndflu.com).

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